

# *The Sublime Teachings of the Vedic Dharma*

*By Dharmadeva, Vidyamartanda*

Vedic Dharma is the best  
The greatest and sweetest  
It teaches us to worship God  
Who is one Omnipresent Lord.  
He is Omniscient, Omnipotent  
Through Vedas is His message sent.  
All beings on earth are God's sons  
Mutual hatred should be

Shunned at once.

We should be friendly to one and all  
Friends them all, we should call.  
No one is high and no one is low  
Sympathy to all, we should show.  
As we sow, so shall we reap  
We should perfect purity keep.  
We should not be engrossed  
In the matter, but go deep,  
Learning to realise  
Our immortal soul, not sleep.  
The spirit of service and self-sacrifice  
Is real Yajna, not animal sacrifice.  
It leads us towards the source of joy  
Where nothing untoward can annoy.  
Knowledge, action and devotion.  
Should go hand in hand

to avert any commotion

United we should stand.

Dharma is not religion, but duty  
Ethics, moral virtues' beauty.

It should drive away all hatred  
That is what's in Vedas stated.



**SWAMI DAYANAND SARSWATI.**  
FOUNDER OF THE ARYA SAMAJ.



THIS BOOKLET  
IS DEDICATED  
TO THE REVERED MEMORY OF  
MAHA RISHI DAYANAND SARASWATHI  
FOUNDER OF THE  
ARYA SAMAJ

ARYA SAMAJ CENTENARY  
1875 – 1975

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MAKER OF MODERN INDIA

## Swami Dayanand

### 1. THE DISPIRITED YOUNG SANYASI

A place in the Himalayas; all round lofty peaks laden with snow looking so much like white-haired munis standing erect as they meditated; the deep Alaknanda River bubbling through ravines in the mountains; the Alaknanda, a tributary of the Ganges, flowing swiftly with its load of ice-cold water. On the banks of this Alaknanda stands a young sannyasi who wears a loincloth. He has a strong physique. Every muscle in his body is taut, but his face is sad, and in his eyes lurks despair. "I shall lose my life in the waters of the Alaknanda. My body shall melt away like the snow of the Himalayas and be no more," the sannyasi murmurs. A voice within him hastily retorts; "No! What sort of a young man are you? You lose courage after only a little effort. Try again. What can't be achieved by trying! The lamp within you has not been lit to be snuffed." The words have an effect on the sannyasi. He fills with hope again, and his face becomes bright. His eyes shine with determination.

Who is this young sannyasi whose age could not have been more than 30 years? He is Swami Dayanand Saraswati. While wandering in the forests of the Himalayas, he had come to the banks of the Alaknanda. The young sannyasi — why had he been wandering? Since when had he been wandering? A few days? Ten-twelve years? No. Two or three years? Ten years? No. He had been wandering for a full fifteen years. Why? He wanted to learn the secret of the world, what life and death was. This was what he searched.

What was the source of the universe? God? Who was God? Where was He? How could He be found? What was the truth? How could one obtain it?

These were the doubts of young Dayanand and to find the answers, he had wandered persistently for fifteen years. And after all his wanderings, he had still not found the answers to his questions.

Then what should the youth do? Commit suicide? No. Young Dayanand, while standing on the banks of the Alakananda, again resolved to seek truth and left to fulfil his wish. Who knows how many more years he would have to wander before the goal was reached.

Who is this young Dayanand? Why did he forsake the joys of this world and become a Sannyasi? What incidents disturbed him so much that he left the pleasures of the world to seek truth? Come let us take a glimpse into his past before we move into the future.

## 2. SPARK OF TRUTH AND TURN OF EVENTS

Gujarat is a province of Western Bharat. In this province is the little state of Morabee. Morabee has a village which is called Tankara. A Brahmin lived in Tankara and in 1824 A.D. a baby was born in his family. The baby's father was Karsonjee Laljee Travadee. The baby was named Moolshanker. Karsonjee was a taseeldar (collector) of the state. He was a man of comfortable means and the child grew up in a happy, affectionate environment.

Being a Brahmin it was incumbent on Karsonjee to learn sanskrit, the Vedas and other religious books. He was studious by nature and therefore enjoyed his study. When Moolshanker grew up he also began to study sanskrit. He took a great interest in grammar and the way rituals and ceremonies were performed. Moolshanker was undoubtedly a child prodigy, for, when he was still very young, he surprised his elders by memorising the whole of the Yajur Veda. This made his father very proud of him.

If Moolshanker continued his studies he would have become a good karam kandi (a brahmin who performed rituals). But Moolshanker was not destined to become a karam kandi. He was born for greater things and this was revealed by three incidents which happened in his life. The incidents were :—

1. Spectacle at Shiv Ratree;
2. Death of his sister and uncle, and
3. Preparation for his marriage.

Karsonjee was a staunch believer in pujas and rituals. Moolshanker did not take long to learn to perform them. He began to fast and take vows, as was customary among brahmins. When Moolshanker was thirteen years old, his father requested him to keep the vow of Shiv Ratree. He was told that if he observed it he would be blessed with a glimpse of God at midnight. This was what Moolshanker wished dearly and he observed the vow with zeal.

In the temple of Shiva, Moolshanker sits and takes part in the rituals. He sings bhajans and kirtans with other devotees. His mind is deep in meditation. While he meditates there is faith in him that that night was the night of supreme revelation. Time passes. Devotees begin to doze. Even the temple priest dozes. One by one they fall into deep sleep. Moolshanker remains awake waiting for the great moment. It comes but God does not appear before him. Instead he sees some mice sporting in the prasad which had been offered to Shiva.

At that moment Moolshanker's faith suffers a great blow. A doubt appears in his mind. He begins to think. Where is God? He resolves that he would seek the Mool (source) of Shanker (God) and with this resolution firmly in his mind, he leaves the temple and returns home. This incident, on the occasion of Shiva Ratree, brought a question to the mind of Moolshanker. Question is the thing which prompts the seeker to search for truth; makes him wish to acquire knowledge and

is the source of the progress of humanity. Question is the thing which made Moolshanker restless for the next fifteen years.

Within the next three years of the incident in the temple, Moolshanker suffered from another blow. The incident in the temple filled him with a doubt, but the next gave him the spur to have his doubt dispelled. Moolshanker had a younger sister. He was attached to her. Suddenly the girl became ill. Her case was so bad that the doctor who attended her could not help. In a matter of hours the girl died.

The death of his sister placed another question before him. What was this thing called death? Was it inevitable? If that was so then what was this thing called life? And why were these in this world?

While he wrestled with these problems, another blow struck him. His uncle died. Moolshanker loved his uncle even more than his father. He lost interest in everyday life. His mind filled with only one desire and that was to seek the ultimate truth of all things.

The questions that came to Moolshanker come to almost every person. In the ordinary man they appear and disappear unanswered. Moolshanker was no ordinary man.

Moolshanker would now sit and brood for the whole day. His parents saw the transformation and realised in which direction his mind was moving. They decided to get him married. Marriage would prevent his thoughts from leading him to ascetism. The anxious parents began to make arrangements for their son's wedding.

### 3. IN SEARCH OF KNOWLEDGE

Moolshanker knew how much the fetters of a householder would keep him from his desires. Therefore he ran away from home before his marriage.

Two thousand five hundred years earlier another youth also ran away from home. His father had discovered his

yearning for spiritual enlightenment and tried to stop his quest by getting him married. The youth married but, on the day his baby was born, left home. That youth was Siddhartha, the same Siddhartha who later appeared before the world as Lord Buddha. Today approximately 50% of the people of Asia are his followers.

Unlike Siddhartha, Moolshanker left home before marriage. He was not prepared to be snared in its mesh. But Moolshanker was young and inexperienced and his father had a long arm in his state. The youth was soon caught at a festival in Siddhpur and brought home. Instead of yielding to his father's will Moolshanker became more determined and ran away again. This youth, this same Moolshanker, later appeared before the world as Maharshi Swami Dayanand Saraswati.

When Moolshanker was 20-21 years old he left to seek the Mool (Source) of Shanker (God); to solve the problem of life and death; to learn the secret of the world. With this aim in mind he wandered in the jungles and followed saints and sadhus. To break away completely from worldly life Moolshanker accepted the order of a swami from Sannyasi Purnanand. Now he was no longer known as Moolshanker but Swami Dayanand.

As Swami Dayanand also had the desire to seek truth, he did not wane and his wandering nature remained. Swami Dayanand learnt yoga from yogis. He discussed religion with Vedantists. They told him that the world was an illusion. This philosophy did not satisfy him and he searched on.

Wherever Dayanand felt that he could get knowledge he went hurrying. In the forest; on the banks of rivers and lakes; in caves and on peaks of mountains the young sannyasi roamed. Thirsty, hungry, with hardly a decent place to sleep; fearing neither the tiger nor the bear of the forest; nor the gales and hurricanes of the plains; nor heat and cold; nor sleet and rain, the young sannyasi wandered on. People tried to dissuade him by telling him of the dangers

which lay ahead. They showed him the sweet side of life and tempted him to stay. Sadhus of the Aghori cult tried to murder him. The Mahant of Okhie Monastery in the Himalayas was prepared to make him his disciple and offered him the leadership of his cult if he would remain with him. But how could a man whose fervour knew no bounds yield to all these? Dayanand went on wandering. From shrine to shrine; from one sacred place to another; from the confluence of the Yamuna and the Ganges to the temples of Narbada and Saraswati he went. At last he came to the banks of Alaknanda River. He was a sannyasi full of despair and ready to commit suicide. Then the voice within him spoke and he filled with the feeling that the goal was not far away.

#### 4. AT THE FEET OF THE GURU

There is a grass hut in the town of Mathura. Early one morning a young sannyasi knocks on its door. The door opens. An old sannyasi stands in the doorway. The sannyasi is so thin that the bones of his ribs show. His forehead is broad and bright. The young sannyasi who knocks on the door touches his feet.

The old sannyasi was Swami Virjanand. The young man who touched his feet was Swami Dayanand. This was their first meeting. The seeker, after his long and tedious quest, had found his master. The youth who had set out to search for truth when he was 21 years old reached his goal 15 years later. What unyielding courage was his? How unquenchable his thirst for knowledge!

During the past fifteen years Dayanand had seen many gurus; had come in contact with many sadhus and sannyasis and appraised many yogis, ascetics, scholars and stoics. In none did he find peace and satisfaction as he did in this 80 year old man. Swami Virjanand was blind. His physical eyes were closed but his inner eyes the eyes of knowledge were open. This blind master set about giving his disciple the light which was to shine over the whole of Bharat for the next twenty years.

Virjanand revealed the secret of his knowledge to Dayanand. He asked him to throw away all worldly books and study those that were written by the sinless, selfless, desireless, detached and prideless rishis of old.

While Dayanand studied he lived an austere and devoted life. He experienced much hardship. Being a sannyasi he did not have the means to provide for himself. What was he to do? Fortunately there were people willing to help. Durga Khatree gave him roasted gram which was his daily breakfast. Amarlal Joshi paid for his groceries. Lala Goburdhan provided oil and a sweet seller, milk. Clothing was no problem. Dayanand had a strong, healthy body and the meagre clothes of a sannyasi were enough for him.

While Dayanand studied he served his guru. Every morning at 4 o'clock he awoke and drew water from the Yamuna river. He followed this by sweeping the hut and the yard and doing other chores.

For about three years Dayanand studied the scriptures, sanskrit, grammar and other subjects at the feet of his guru. Knowledge he already had but a proper understanding a proper interpretation he lacked. This his guru gave him. Dayanand's outlook changed. His doubts vanished. He now knew the secret of life. The Moolshanker of Tankara had found the Moolshanker of the universe.

When his studies were complete Dayanand wished to leave. It was customary to give gifts to the teacher at the time of departure. The only thing that Dayanand could afford was a bowl of cloves. Virjanand loved cloves and Dayanand could not have found a better gift.

The bowl of cloves pleased the old master but he said, "Dayanand, I am not satisfied with the gift. I desire something bigger, something which only you could give. Son, with the knowledge you have at your disposal, go and dispel the darkness of ignorance which envelopes our country. Preach the truth of the shastras and the Vedic religion.

Serve your country in this way. If you do this you will give me the gift I ask."

Humbly Dayanand accepted his guru's words, and, till the end of his life - for the next twenty years - tried to do what was demanded of him. The master had opened the pupil's eyes. Now it was the pupil's turn to open the eyes of Bharat. Dayanand came out of the hut. His face shone with the fire of his responsibilities, and in his heart glowed the peace one gets when one is profoundly satisfied

## 5. RESOLUTION ON THE BANKS OF THE GANGES

### Banner of Censure

The young graduate who left the hut of Virjanand was not without experience. He had learnt much during the fifteen years when he had sieved the dust and dirt of Bharat. He had found the disease with which the mother country suffered. To cure it was his next task. Bharat was a land of superstition and blind faith. There was social and political degradation all round. The people were slaves of meaningless customs and observances. The desire to enquire and discover no longer existed in their minds. There was no longer the urge to endeavour for race, religion and realm. The Bharat of the 18th Century was ignorant, lazy and idle. It was at this time that Dayanand entered the arena.

In 1867 a Kumb Mela was to take place in Hardwar. Hardwar is on the banks of the Ganges. It is the gateway to the Himalayas. At this place the Ganges River leaves the mountain and enters Bharat to distribute her priceless wealth to the plains. At this place also the saints who discover the mines of truth in the Himalayas enter Bharat to distribute their precious finds to the people.

Swami Dayanand arrived at Hardwar on the occasion of the Mela. He was no stranger to Hardwar as he had been in those parts before when he searched for knowledge. Thousands of people had gathered at the place. Sadhus and

sannyasis, saints and mahatmas, monks and mendicants, priests and pilgrims all were there.

As soon as Swamiji arrived in Hardwar he began his campaign in earnest. He condemned hypocrisy and preached the religion of the Vedas. After Gautama Buddha and Shankaracharya, Dayanand was, perhaps, the only one to throw a challenge to orthodoxy.

To turn the flow of thoughts which had come down for thousands of years, he had to cleanse the beliefs of the people as one would a dirty utensil. He began to do this by a fiery condemnation of prevalent customs, practices and ostentations. Those who belonged to cults with dubious philosophies were also criticised. Swamijee conducted the campaign in an able manner. He was outspoken and never afraid.

After Hardwar, Swamijee went to many places in Northern India. Wherever he preached his stand was the same. He never spared those who had corrupted the Vedic religion.

Swami Dayanand was an exceptionally good speaker. Nobody could stand against his excellent arguments. His speeches were never boring because he spiced them with humour and jokes. It was not long before Swamijee made contact with the people and thousands came to hear him. He began getting invitations to lecture at meetings and soon wherever he went his fame preceded him. After lectures hundreds of people gathered at his retiring places. By conversing with him they were able to have their doubts dispelled.

## 6. IN THE STRONGHOLD OF SANSKRIT, BENARES (KASHI)

Swamijee's propaganda created alarm among the religious leaders of the time. They asked what kind of religion was this that believed in only one god and not the many gods and goddesses they knew? What kind of religion was this that recognised only the authority of the Vedas and no other religious book? What kind of religion was this that condemned idol worship? It stated that there was no place

for idol worship in the Vedas; nor for avatars and ancestral worship; nor for discrimination by caste, colour or creed. It did not believe in the sanctifying influence of the waters of the Ganges, nor the religious significance of the eclipse of the sun and the moon.

Wherever Dayanand went he threw a challenge. "Come, sit with me," he said. "Let me open the pages of the shastras. Let us test the authority of my beliefs. Let us understand and recognize our religion." Pandits took up the challenge, but in the debates that followed they invariably suffered defeat. In this way Swamijee campaigned in towns, villages, sanskrit colleges and universities, temples, monasteries, pilgrimages and religious abodes of northern India.

The priests and scholars who were humiliated in arguments started an exodus to Kashi. It was their belief that if the sannyasi was to be defeated it would be in Kashi. Someday he would arrive in the holy city and they would see him bow to the learnings of the scholars of the place.

In 1869 Swami Dayanand arrived in Kashi. His coming created a stir among the scholars. The general public pupils and gurus, devotees and priests and all were filled with excitement. They knew that the anticipated debate would be held soon. It took place under the chairmanship of the King of Kashi, Maharajah Ishwar Narayan Singh. Swami Dayanand was on one side with the Vedas. On the other were Swami Vishudananda, Pandit Tara Charran, Pt. Bal Shastri, Pandit Vamanacharya and others. They were a formidable opposition but Swamijee defeated them one by one. The debate went on for four hours until it was evening. Then the vanquished sought the aid of the failing light. They got their followers to create a commotion. The chief of police of the town was present. He sensed that Swamijee's life was in danger and escorted him safely to his place of residence.

Dayanand returned to Kashi seven times but, after the first defeat, nobody had the courage to face him again.

## 7. PROPAGANDA AND OPPOSITION

After his encounter with the pandits of Kashi, Dayanand wandered all over Bharat and preached wherever he went. North, East, West and Central India all areas became his fields of labour. His propaganda began to take effect. It caused an awakening in the people and roused a feeling of self respect in the individual.

Before Swami Dayanand's time the Christian mission had obtained a foothold in Bharat. Moslems were also endeavouring to make converts at about the same time. Thousands left Hinduism and joined the new faiths. Those who converted left not because their religion was bad but because of a lack of knowledge of it. The convertors took advantage of their ignorance and indifference and exploited prevalent vices like the caste system and blind orthodoxy.

Then Swami Dayanand entered the field. He placed before the people a true picture of their religion. The people listened to him and the onslaught of Islam and Christianity waned. As a counter propaganda Swamijee exposed the weaknesses in the philosophy of the proselytising groups. This made the people look at their own religion with pride.

But saving his people from conversion was not Swamijee's aim. To reform their beliefs, show them the true path was what he had set out to do. In this task he suffered much opposition from his own kind. Swami Dayanand often said

"I am a disciple of truth. I shall always speak the truth. If in doing that I hurt anybody the fault is not mine. I shall never leave truth." He lived up to his words fearlessly.

Because of his preachings many people became Dayanand's followers. Many of them decided to be his disciples. Not only did he have wellwishers among Hindus but among Moslems and Christians also. Among them Reverend Scott and Sayed Ahmed Khan are worthy of mention. But there



were many who thought of him as their enemy. They were the ones who used religion for their selfish ends. They threatened him; poisoned his food and milk and often met him with an onslaught of bricks and stones. Swamijee bore their attacks calmly and forgave those who would harm him.

Swamijee was a fearless man and intimidations never worried him. His friends always offered to protect his person but Swamijee never took advantage of their kindness. He was a life long celibate (bramacharaya). Through physical culture and yoga he had acquired a strong body. No one who wanted to do him bodily harm dared to come close. A challenge in his powerful voice was enough to frighten the bravest of his assailants.

Once Swamijee lectured in Anupshahar. A man gave him a folded paan to eat. The moment Swamijee put it into his mouth he realised that there was poison in it. Swamijee's Moslem friend, Sayed Ahmed, a police officer, caught the would-be-assassin and wanted to send him to prison. But Swamijee said "Leave him. I have come to free humanity, not to put them into prison." Swamijee's words left Sayed Ahmed speechless with admiration.

On another occasion, while Swamijee walked along the banks of the Ganges, two powerful looking men attacked him. They wanted to throw him into the river. Swamijee sensed their intention. Before they could achieve their purpose he caught them in a grip from which they could not free themselves. With both assailants still in his grasp he jumped into the river. He dived a few times in the water and when the two were gasping for breath and terribly frightened brought them to the bank. Swamijee released them and they slunk away like dogs with tails between their legs.

Swamijee was delivering a speech in Amritsar when a group of children began to throw stones at him. The people caught them and inquired why they had behaved in that fashion. The children said that they were sent by Swamijee's enemies who had promised to give them sweets. Instead of punishing the children Swamijee bought sweets for them and let them go.

Swamijee was a quick-witted person and often used humour and biting remarks to quieten the opposition. Once a shastri came to discourse with him. He said "I am more learned than Dayanand. Therefore I should be given a higher seat." Dayanand said, "Give him a higher seat. If a person is judged by the seat he takes then look up. A crow sits on the branch of that tree. Perhaps he is more learned than you." Humbled in this way the shastri left without discoursing with Swamijee.

When a pandit came to discuss religion with Swamijee he brought a knife with him. He said that whoever lost would have his nose cut off. Swamijee laughingly said, "Why blame the innocent nose. If any part of our body had to be cut it should be the tongue because it is the tongue which will be at fault."

Karansingh was the chief of the state of Karanwas. He had a red dot on his forehead and always carried a sword. Karansingh believed in the sanctifying effect of the water of the Ganges. When Karansingh met Swamijee he asked him whether he believed in the miraculous power of the river. Swamijee said, "I accept the Ganges as it is. For me the vessel in which I carry my water is my Ganges."

"Then does not a person who bathes in the Ganges have his sins washed away?" the chief asked angrily.

"Brother," Swamijee said. "One does not get rid of his sins by bathing in a river or by having faith in some mahatma. Our sins and virtues are obtained by our deeds."

Swamijee's reply made Karansingh angry. He took out his sword and wanted to run it through him. Swamijee held the assailant's hand, snatched the sword and broke it into two. Dayanand's action made Karansingh so ashamed of himself that he left the place without a word.



On another occasion Swamijee was about to depart from a place called Moonger. As the train was late he strolled on the platform. A white engineer and his wife sat on a seat on the platform. The white engineer became very angry when Swamijee came and stood close to him. Swamijee wore only a loin cloth and his appearance offended the white man. The engineer called the stationmaster and asked him to get rid of the man in the loin cloth. The stationmaster tactfully told Swamijee that as there was still time for the train to arrive he should rest in the waiting room. Swamijee sensed the reason for the stationmaster's request. He replied "Tell the white man that I am from the age of Adam and Eve." Having said this he remained at his place. His defiant attitude made the engineer angrier. He demanded that the man in the loin cloth be moved. The stationmaster told him that Swamijee was no ordinary sadhu. He was the great Swami Dayanand Saraswathi. When the engineer heard this his mood changed. He went to Swamijee and apologised. "For a long time it has been my wish to meet you. Now my wish has been fulfilled," he said.

There are many incidents like the above in Swamijee's life. They illustrate his fearless nature, his quick wittedness and his faith in God.

## 8. FORMATION OF THE ARYA SAMAJ

Swamijee's teachings changed the outlook of the people. Their enthusiasm for their religion grew. Wherever he went he met the important people of the place. Vedantists, Molvis, Christian priests, all were eager to spend some time with him. He even met the great leaders of the time. With them Dayanand discussed not only religion but also the sorry plight of the country, the need for a common language, social reforms and how the people could be better organised. For all these subjects Swamijee had a passionate interest.

Among the great people he met the names of the following

are worthy of mention : Keshav Chandra Son, Ramkrishna Paramahansa, Kanhayelall Alakdhari, Harischandra Chintamonie, Sir Sayed Ahmed Khan, Mahadev Govind Rande, Reverend Scott, Colonel Henry Olcott and Madam Blavatsky.

As Swamijee's teachings became more and more effective and his followers grew, he began to think of forming a permanent institution which could carry on his work. On 10th April, 1875, a meeting of Swamijee's followers took place in Bombay where the first Arya Samaj was formed.

According to the Sixth Principle of the Arya Samaj service to humanity is a function of the society. In other words the physical, spiritual and social welfare of the people is a concern of the Samaj. The Arya Samaj believes in an omniscient, omnipresent, omnipotent, formless, immutable eternal, ageless, and immortal God who created the universe. God revealed the knowledge of the Vedas to the ancient rishis. The Vedas are the most sacred and the most authoritative books. The Arya Samaj is ever prepared to accept truth and condemn untruth. With such great ideals the first Arya Samaj was formed.

After the creation of the first Samaj others began to be formed wherever Swamijee went. The Society gained strength in the Punjab. In the large as well as the small towns and villages of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, and Rajasthan it also got a strong foothold. When there were enough Samaj's all over the country they were brought under central institutions in the different provinces.

The movement of the Arya Samaj spread to countries outside India. In time it became a world movement. When the need arose a central international institution was created. Its headquarters is in Delhi and it is called the International Aryan League.

## 9. THE INFLUENCE OF SWAMI DAYANAND AND THE ARYA SAMAJ

The Arya Samaj is essentially a religious body but its aims cover other aspects of life also. For this reason it

has done much work in the fields of social reform, education and helped to awaken the political and patriotic conscience of the country.

Because of the work of the Arya Samaj thousands of people gave up the worshipping of devas and devatas and rejected polytheism. They transferred their prayers to the one and only God. Belief in idolworship declined. Faith in avatars, ancestral worship, sanctifying effects of the Ganges River, superstitious beliefs centring around the eclipse of the moon and sun and the effect of the wrath of gods and goddesses were thrown overboard. The conviction that one became sinful when one travelled to foreign countries was laughed at. Religion broke its bonds of narrow mindedness and became universal. Foolish customs, blind faith and superstitions began to be questioned. In other words the efforts of Dayanand and the Arya Samaj created a revolt in prevalent Hinduism.

In the field of religion Swami Dayanand's greatest gift was his exposition of the Vedas. All sects of Hinduism have faith in the Vedas. They accept them as their authoritative and sacred books but a foolish reverence prevented them from finding out what they contained. Not only did the scholars and religious pandits not read the Vedas but they did not know where the original scripts could be found. Swami Dayanand discovered them and revealed them to the people. Swamijee did not start a new religion. He endeavoured only to show the world what the Vedas contained. He showed the difference between Vedic Sanskrit and popular Sanskrit and presented the essence of the sacred books to the people. In the past thousand years there has never been a man who knew the Vedas as well as Swami Dayanand.

Time, place and age had added much to our philosophy and befuddled its meaning. Swami Dayanand got rid of all foreign influences and placed it before us in its original form. Evidence of his great work can be seen in literature which he left behind. Among them the following are popular :-

1. A Commentary on the Vedas.
2. The Light of Truth - a commentary and review of the Hindu religion.
3. Introduction to the commentary of the Vedas.
4. Book of Sacraments.

Swamijee created an upheaval in Hindu society just as he had done in religion. He set about organising the people. In these times Hindus have the strength of their self-respect. They are proud of what they are and have faith in themselves. Nobody has done more to create this feeling than Swami Dayanand. Swamijee was the first leader to raise his voice against the curse of untouchability. He was the first person to raise his voice for the social emancipation of women. He condemned child marriage and the marriage of very old men to young girls. He started a movement to allow child-widows to remarry. To rehabilitate untouchables he opened ashrams and embraced the oppressed as if they were his brothers

In the field of education Swami Dayanand and the Arya Samaj did much. At one time it was looked upon as irreligious to educate women and the oppressed classes Swamijee changed this outlook. His movement established Anglo-Vedic schools, colleges, gurukuls, women tuition classes and sanskrit educational institutions all over the country. In these places attention was given not only to sanskrit and religion but also to subjects like science, mathematics, politics and economics. Bright students like Shyamjee Krishnavarma were sent to Germany to further their studies. Nobody had thought of doing these things before Swamijee's time.

Swami Dayanand and the Arya Samaj were foremost in creating a feeling of patriotism in the people and making them politically conscious. The Indian National Congress was established in 1883. When Lokmanya Tilak came into the political field in 1907 he brought the word 'Swaraj' with him. But as far back as 1875 Swami Dayanand had mentioned the subject in his book "Satyarth Prakash" and had said that no matter how well a foreign government ruled over one it was better to have one's own government.

Swami Dayanand was the first man to arouse the spirit of nationalism in the people. He said that the people would be united if they had one national language. Although he was a Gujarati he said that Hindi should be the national language of Bharat. The Arya Samaj took on the onus of promoting Hindi education in the country. Forty years after, Mahatma Gandhi supported the campaign. Mahatma Gandhi showed interest also in another task in which Swami Dayanand and the Arya Samaj had endeavoured persistently. That task was to uplift the oppressed classes. In brief Swami Dayanand and the Arya Samaj cleared the jungle, tilled the soil and sowed the seed. Gandhi and the Indian National Congress reaped the harvest.

The revolutionary movement to free India started in 1905. In 1920 Mahatma Gandhi began his Satyagrah and non-cooperation movement. Swami Dayanand had started the campaign to get Swaraj for India in 1881. His movement was of a different nature from that of Mahatma Gandhi and the Indian National Congress.

After the first Indian war of freedom in 1857 the British rulers became more oppressive. Both the people and the Indian princes were made to suffer. Seeing that the people were devoted to the princes Swamijee felt that it would pay dividends to get them organized. He tried to arouse a sense of duty in them and was often found in the courts of the princes of western and central India. Many of the princes began to accept Swamijee as their guru. He encouraged them to learn western sciences, politics and military arts. It was not long before secret agents discovered that the purpose behind his campaign was to prepare the princes for insurrection and for this he was made to pay with his life.

In this way Swami Dayanand and the Arya Samaj did much for Bharat in the fields of religion, society, politics and education. They were successful to a remarkable degree in their efforts. Not only in Hindu society but in other societies also their influence was felt directly and indirectly. Therefore it is true to say that they were successful in turning the flow of Indian thought.

## 10. SUPREME SACRIFICE FOR RELIGION AND COUNTRY

"If this body is not destroyed by any lethal means it shall fulfil its course of 100 years as laid down in the Vedas." These were the words of Swami Dayanand who had been a brahmacharya since childhood. He had reached his 60th year but there was no wrinkle of age on his face. His body was as lustrous as a polished piece of copper and his senses were as keen as those of a youth. Yogic culture had made him physically, mentally and spiritually perfect. Death was under his control, it seemed.

In 1883 Swami Dayanand was preaching in Rajputana and Central India when he arrived at Jodhpur. Colonel Sir Pratap Singh, Prince Tej Singh and members of his family who lived in Jodhpur were disciples of Swamijee. The king of Jodhpur, Yashwant Singh, had a high regard for Swamijee and everyday, Swamijee delivered lectures of approximately two hours on political science in his palace. One day, when Swamijee went to the palace, he saw a lewd woman whose name was Nanee Jan. Swamijee was a fearless outspoken person and rebuked the king for his association with the woman. The king hung his head with shame. Swamijee's words hurt Nanee Jan and she vowed to take revenge for the insults which had been heaped on her.

Swamijee's cook was a man named Jaggernath. By using bribes Nanee Jan got him under her will. One evening Swamijee lay on his bed drinking a glass of milk. The milk had been poisoned. Suddenly Swamijee felt excruciating pains in his stomach. He began to vomit. He tried yogic exercises to rid himself of the pain but without success. Swamijee had been poisoned before but always his yogic exercises came to his rescue. This time they failed to give him relief. A doctor who attended Swamijee said that the poison was a very potent one.

Rishi Dayanand asked to see his cook. Jaggernath began to cry when he saw Swamijee on the sick bed. He disclosed

his part in the murderous deed. Swami Dayanand forgave Juggernath. Not only that, he gave him money and told him to flee towards Nepal where he would be safe. We have seen in these pages that Swamijee had forgiven other would-be-assassins also. He was a true sannyasi who had no hatred for those who bore him ill will.

Swamijee was attended by a doctor but his treatment had no effect on him. His health worsened. When Swamijee's disciples heard of his plight they came hurrying to Jodhpur. Swamijee was taken to Mount Abu. He was treated there by Dr. Lakshmandass. The treatment helped but Dr. Lakshmandass, for some unknown reason, was transferred to Ajmer. The Rishi was also taken to Ajmer but the journey to the city worsened his condition. Swamijee's body became covered with pimples and blisters. He found difficulty in speaking and was so weak that moving his limbs was a problem.

On Diwali night, 30th October, 1883, Swamijee's disciples stood around his bed. Swamijee asked for all doors to be opened. He sat up and chanted Vedic mantras. After reciting the Gayatri he opened his eyes. His face bore a pleased expression. The great man said; "O God, who is compassionate, if this is Your will let it be. My life has been a wonderful play." Having said this Swamijee lay on the bed. His features were calm. A little while passed. Then Swamijee held his breath. When he let it go his soul went with it.

That Diwali night the light of Dayanand's soul fused with the great light of God. That night thousands of little lights burnt in every home but Mother Bharat's brightest lamp was no more. Nay, from that lamp countless other lamps found their light and in that it found peace.

Maharshi Dayanand was the maker of Modern India. He was the messenger of the new awakening in his mother country. Dayanand had to prepare the path of progress for Bharat. To do this he had to clear the forest of foolish faith, meaningless customs, ignorance and superstitions. He

gave a new life to the aged, sterile, frail and disorganised Hindu race and filled it with the hope of his great knowledge. Today thousands of men, women and children march on the path he created. They hold aloft the banner of Truth and the Vedas. Their heads are high for they are no longer ignorant, no longer suffering from discrimination, no longer oppressed and no longer filled with the fear of superstition. As they march, they sing the praise of Maharshi Swami Dayanand who gave his life for religion, race and humanity. May the Hindu race ever march on that path and may the banner of Truth and Vedas ever fly aloft.



SWAMI DAYANAND SARASWATI

"The world is fettered by the chain forged by superstition and ignorance. I have come to snap asunder that chain and to set slaves at liberty. It is contrary to my mission to have people deprived of their freedom."

I have not come to preach any new dogma or religion, nor to establish a new religious order, nor to be proclaimed a new Messiah or pontiff. I have only brought before my people the light of Vedic Wisdom which had been hidden during the centuries of India's thralldom — — Swami Dayanand